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Letter dated 30 March 2004 addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you attached the text of a communication dated 25 March 2004 that I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (see annex).

I would be grateful if you would bring this communication to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 25 March 2004 addressed to the Secretary-General by the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

[Original: English]

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1088 (1996), I attach the monthly report on the operations of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) for February 2004. I would appreciate your making this report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Jaap de **Hoop Scheffer**

Enclosure

Monthly report to the United Nations on the operations of the Stabilization Force

1. Over the reporting period (1 to 29 February 2004) there were 10,579 troops deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

Security

2. The overall situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina remained stable during the period under review, with no serious incidents to report.

3. On 9 February, the High Representative, Lord Ashdown, joined by the Commander of the Stabilization Force and the United States Ambassador Clifford Bond, announced a series of actions against several individuals for their provision of material support to persons indicted for war crimes, namely Radovan Karadzic. The most prominent person on the list is former Bosnian Serb presidency member Mirko Sarovic, who resigned over the Orao affair in 2003. The list also includes the chiefs of police of Lukavica, near Sarajevo, and of Pale. The package of measures freezes the bank accounts of those on the list, dismisses them from political office and bars them from standing for office again.

Attacks against SFOR and SFOR operational activities

4. There were no significant acts of violence directed against SFOR personnel over the reporting period.

5. SFOR continued to contribute to the maintenance of a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to monitor possible terrorist-related threats throughout the country. SFOR remained engaged with weapons collection, destruction and framework operations.

6. The results of weapons turned-in/collected from 1 to 29 February within the framework of Operation Harvest are: 631 small arms (rifles, pistols and revolvers, etc); 152,408 rounds of ammunition less than 20 mm; 23,158 rounds of ammunition between 20 mm and 76 mm; 284 rounds of ammunition more than 76 mm; 2,404 hand grenades; 184 mines; 63.15 kilograms of explosives; 2,951 other items (mortars and mortar rounds, rifle grenades, handmade ordnance, attack rocket, etc). Weapons collection results showed increased success. SFOR will continue its efforts in this area in order to contribute to the maintenance of sustained stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

7. However, as part of SFOR's strategy to facilitate the transfer of responsibilities to nascent authorities, the local police will be increasingly encouraged to lead operations of execute Operation Harvest activities independently.

8. On 20 February, Operation Armadillo was transformed to Operation Armadillo 2, changing SFOR's support for the reduction of unserviceable, redundant and obsolete Entity Armed Forces ammunition. The focus of Operation Armadillo 2 will be more on training and monitoring the efforts of the Entity Armed Forces and less on direct involvement.

9. In February 2004, the Volunteer Reserve Forces destroyed 4,539 SA-7 and 37 SA-16 man-portable anti-aircraft rockets. This initiative is a consistent step forward in defence reform.

10. On 19 February, an SFOR document examination team, supported by the Multinational Specialized Units, conducted a search of the PTT office and Sveti Jovan radio station in Pale. The focus of the operation was to investigate non-compliance issues such as wire-tapping and surveillance of SFOR operations. The Sveti Jovan radio station is owned by Radovan Karadzic's daughter, Sonja, and was previously inspected by SFOR on 2 January 2003.

11. The aircraft of the President of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,[1] President Trajkovski, crashed on 26 February 2004 near Mostar. SFOR immediately initiated a series of measures to assist the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities who were in overall control of the search and rescue operation. The board of inquiry into the crash has begun its work under the lead of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Department of Civil Aviation.

12. On 17 February, the Force Commander, Major General Virgil Packett, sent a letter to Dragan Covic, the Bosnian-Croat tri-Presidency member, ordering him to discharge six officers from the Bosnian-Croat component of the army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately. The officers include one major, four colonels and Brigadier-General Jozo Beljo. The six officers were dismissed because they had engaged in anti-Dayton activities as part of the Bosnian-Croat third-entry movement.

Cooperation and compliance by the parties

13. On 24 February, SFOR completed an operation in order to release Zeljko Jankovic to Republika Srpska Interior Ministry Police (MUP) authorities in Bijeljina. Jankovic was detained by SFOR during another operation in Bijeljina on 28 January 2004.

14. On 2 February, at the 42nd Joint Military Commission (JMC) meeting at Camp Butmir, representatives of the Entity Armed Forces agreed to significant personnel cuts. According to the agreement, the army of the Republika Srpska (VRS) will dismiss 2,200 troops and civilian employees by March 2004, and its strength will be reduced to 4,000 personnel; the army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (VF) is to be cut by 5,200 forces to a level of 8,000 personnel.

15. During the reporting period, the Entity Armed Forces have carried out normal training activities, in compliance with the military provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. In February 2004, there were no reports of missing weapons from weapons storage sites.

16. There were a total of 135 Entity Armed Forces training and operational activities (15 VRS and 120 VF) during the reporting period and 205 movements (72 VRS and 133 VF) conducted during the reporting period. A total of 10 teams have been working on three separate mine-clearing tasks throughout the period. All entities can be considered to have been compliant.

[1] Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name.

17. SFOR conducted a total of 37 weapons storage sites and ammunition storage sites inspections during the reporting period (16 VRS and 21 VF). One site was closed this month and another 12 are pending closure.

Outlook

18. In February, SFOR continued to maintain a safe and secure environment, and the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain in compliance with the General Framework Agreement for Peace. During the reporting period, SFOR conducted several operations related to persons indicted for war crimes and individuals involved in their support networks. SFOR's active role in weapons collection operations has diminished with responsibility now being transferred to the Entity Armed Forces.